BRITISH COLUMBIA

BC STATS Infoline

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highlights

a weekly digest of recently released British Columbia statistics

The Economy

- **Wages, salaries and benefits received by BC workers increased 0.7% (seasonally adjusted) between September and October.** The rise in labour income was nearly double the national average of 0.4%. Earnings were up in every region except Quebec (where they were flat) and Yukon (-2.6%). New Brunswick (+1.1%), Alberta (+1.0%) and PEI (+1.0%) posted the strongest increases.

  Source: SC, Catalogue 13F0016XPB

- **The value of building permits issued by BC municipalities fell 1.5% (seasonally adjusted) in November, as an 18.7% decline in permits for residential projects more than offset a 30.6% jump in the value of non-residential permits issued.** Canadian permits were up 4.0%. Residential permits rose moderately (+1.0%), while the value of planned non-residential construction increased 8.1%.

  Source: Statistics Canada

Housing

- **Housing starts in BC fell 3.7% (seasonally adjusted) in December after posting a healthy 19.0% gain in the previous month.** BC was the only province outside Atlantic Canada where the number of starts was down last month. Nationally, starts edged up 0.3%, reflecting moderate increases in Ontario (+2.3%), Quebec (+1.2%) and Alberta (+1.2%), and stronger growth in the other prairie provinces, where housing starts recovered from a dismal performance in November.

  Source: Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation

- **Housing starts in urban areas of the province continued to drop last year, decreasing 19.6% to a preliminary total of 14,169 (down from 17,625 in 1998).** Last year's decline, which came on the heels of a 30.1% slide in 1998, brought starts down to their lowest level since 1984. CMHC expects housing starts in the province to improve during 2000.

  In the Vancouver area, multiple unit starts plunged 39.9%, to 5,109. Despite strong gains in Victoria (+82.2%), Abbotsford (+50.9%) and Kelowna (+110.3%), total multiple unit starts in the province's urban centres were down 31.1% (to 7,295) last year.

  Offsetting the drop in multiple starts was a 5.8% increase in single family dwelling starts in the Vancouver CMA and a 1.9% advance in Victoria. However, the number of single unit starts in other urban areas of the province declined, and overall, single unit starts fell to 2.3% below the 1998 level.

  Source: Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation

- **The cost of new housing in the province continued to decline in November.** Vancouver's new housing price index (NHPI) fell 2.7%, while the NHPI in Victoria was down 5.4% from November 1998. Vancouver, Victoria and Sudbury/Thunder Bay (-1.4%) were once again the only areas where new house prices fell. The Canadian index rose 1.6%, led by strong price increases in Halifax (+4.6%) and Calgary (+4.4%).

  Source: Statistics Canada

Does it Pay to Renovate?

- **Homeowners who renovate in order to improve the resale value of their house get the biggest bang for their buck when they dust off their paint brushes.** According to the Appraisal Institute of Canada, the pay back on interior painting is 73 cents on the dollar. Kitchen renovation (72 cents) and bathroom remodelling (68 cents) also have a fairly high pay back potential. Homeowners typically get a smaller return when they invest in new doors and windows (57 cents),

Report **Income characteristics of recent immigrants**

Did you know...
The most common skiing injury is a sprained thumb.

living room additions (51 cents) or basement renovations (49 cents).

Source: CMHC Housing Facts

Skiers

- **During the 1998/99 ski season, a record-setting 5.6 million visits were made to ski areas in the province–nearly a million more than the previous high of 4.7 million, set in 1994/95.** The number of skier visits to BC resorts was up 25% last winter as high snowpack levels in the spring allowed downhill skiers to participate in their sport long beyond the usual end of the season. Ski hills in Alberta also enjoyed a good year, setting a record for that province of 2.6 million skier visits, 35% more than in 1997/98.

  Nearly a third (32%) of all visits by alpine skiers (aged 12 and over) to ski resorts in Canada last season were made in BC. Quebec, where the resident population is about 80% larger than BC's, was the only province with a similarly large share of the Canadian market (33%).

  Source: Canadian Ski Council data

- **Cross-country skiing hasn't caught on to the same extent as alpine skiing in BC.** There were about twice as many alpine (496,000) skiers as cross-country (213,000) skiers in the province in 1998/99. Nationwide, there were 3.1 million alpine skiers and 2.1 million cross-country skiers last winter.

  Snowboarding is becoming more and more popular, especially with the younger set. Three out of four (72%) snowboarders in Canada are between the ages of 12 and 24, and nearly half (46%) of the most active snowboarders (those who snowboard at least three times a month) are between 12 and 17. Last season, 146,000 people in BC participated in this sport. Nationwide, there were 867,000 snowboarders.

  Source: Print Measurement Bureau & The Canadian Ski Council

- **BC is the destination of choice for skiers coming to Canada from south of the border.** More than half (56%) of the 480,800 overnight visits made by American tourists who skied in Canada last winter were to resorts in BC. Quebec, with 24% of the market, was the second-most popular destination. Forty-five percent of the US visitors to British Columbia were from Washington State, with another 12% coming from California. American skiers spent more than $213 million in BC last winter. *Source: SC. Catalogue 87-003*

- **The province was also the most popular spot for skiers from overseas who travelled to Canada for some winter fun.** Of the 242,600 overnight visits to Canada by skiers from overseas, 117,000 were made to resorts in this province. Alberta was the second most common choice for those coming from further afield, with 56,500 overnight visits. Fifty-eight percent of the $320 million spent in Canada by skiers from overseas was used to buy goods and services in BC. Britons accounted for 36% of BC's receipts. *Source: SC. Catalogue 87-003*

Tourism

- **Room revenue in BC edged up 0.2% (seasonally adjusted) between August and September, increasing to $109.3 million.** September's modest increase came as revenue rose in all but three regions. Mainland/Southwest properties, accounting for nearly 60% of the total, continued to struggle, with revenue falling (-1.1%) for the fifth time in the last six months. Revenue in the northern regions of the province was also down. It fell 5.8% in Northeast, ending a nearly half-year-long expansion, and dipped 0.6% in Nechako. However, properties in the interior of the province had a better month. Revenue was up 6.6% in Cariboo, and also increased in Thompson/Okanagan (+3.2%), and Kootenay (+2.8%). North Coast (+2.2%) and Vancouver Island/Coast (+1.2%) posted more modest gains.

  After peaking in February and then declining for four months, room revenue in the province appears to be stabilizing. Third quarter revenue was up 1.4%, after posting a 5.7% decline in the second quarter. However, other tourism indicators suggest that the tourism sector may be cooling off again. Visitor entries from other countries were down 0.6% in October.

  Source: BC STATS & Statistics Canada

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For data originating from Statistics Canada: data sourced to 'Statistics Canada' has been retrieved from CANSIM, the agency's electronic database; otherwise the source is identified as 'SC' plus the publication name or catalogue number.

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Infoline Report: Income characteristics of recent immigrants (IMDB Series)

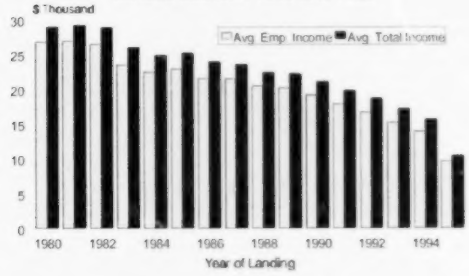
Contact: Frank Ip / (250) 387-0336

Originally published in Third Quarter 1999 issue of *Immigration Highlights*. Annual subscription: $30 + GST

While female immigrants had lower average employment income than their male counterparts, the level of employment income, regardless of the gender of immigrants, seems to be related proportionally to their length of time in Canada.

Sixty one per cent of the immigrants who landed in Canada during 1980-95 and who were residing in B.C in 1995 reported earnings from employment (excluding self-employment income). The average employment income for this group was around $19,000 in 1995. Comparing average employment income for immigrants residing in B.C. in 1995 by their year of landing indicates that earnings tended to be higher for immigrants who arrived earlier. The same observation was also made for average total income reported by this same group of immigrants who had employment income. Total incomes in this article included employment income, unemployment benefits, self-employment income and all investment income.

1995 Average Income of B.C. Immigrants
Landed Between 1980 and 1995



Differences in employment income for immigrants landed in different periods might have been due to factors related to settlement issues such as length of Canadian job market experience and English language proficiency.

Significant discrepancies also existed in employment income between male and female immigrants over the study period. Average employment income in 1995 was $22,200 for male immigrants and $15,600 for female immigrants. One of the explanations for this large difference in employment earnings was that a relatively higher proportion of immigrant families/couples in the economic classes were headed by males, and hence, male immigrants were more likely to be employed full time. Statistics show that two-thirds of the principal applicants arriving during 1980-1995 under the economic classes were men.

Another possible reason for this income difference was that woman immigrants, when compared to their man counterparts, were relatively more likely to be engaged in lower paying jobs and/or part time employment.

. . . Continued in the next page

New Data Makes Studies of Mobility and Performance after landing Possible

New studies are made possible by using data available from the Longitudinal Immigration Database (IMDB) developed jointly by Statistics Canada and Citizenship and Immigration Canada. This database is created by combining income tax records from Revenue Canada and immigration records for a sample of immigrants who arrived in Canada between 1980 and 1995. By comparing an immigrant's province of initial landing and the province of residence as indicated on the same immigrant's tax return, interprovincial mobility of this immigrant can be determined. Also, indicators can be developed to examine certain characteristics of immigrants, such as their earnings, for a period after they arrived in Canada.

The sample in the database is large enough to be representative for the general immigrant population who landed between 1980 and 1995. For example, the actual number of immigrants aged 15 and older who landed in B.C. between 1980 and 1995 was about 347,789 persons. The sample contained within the IMDB was 194,565 immigrants, about 56% of the actual total ladnings. This is the third feature article utilizing the IMDB.

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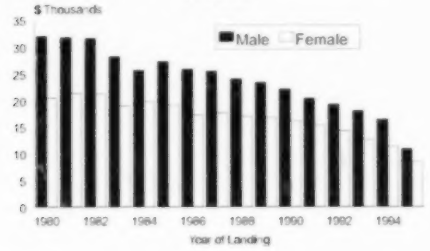
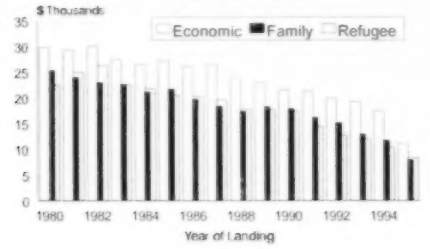
1995 Average Employment Income of B.C. Immigrants
By Gender



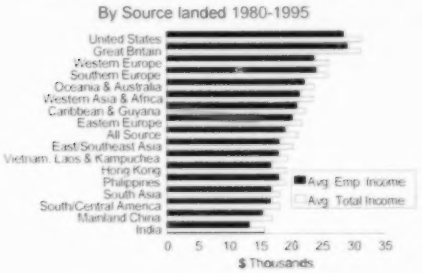
Both average employment income and average total income were significantly higher for those who landed under the independent or business classes, which represented 38 per cent of all immigrants who reported having earned employment income in 1995. Except for those in the Retired Class, immigrants from family classes tended to earn a lower average employment income. Immigrants in the Retired Class reported the lowest employment income but a much higher income from sources other than employment. Regardless of the class under which they arrived, immigrants tended to earn higher employment income as their time in Canada become longer.

1995 Average Employment Income of BC Immigrants
By Class By landed Year



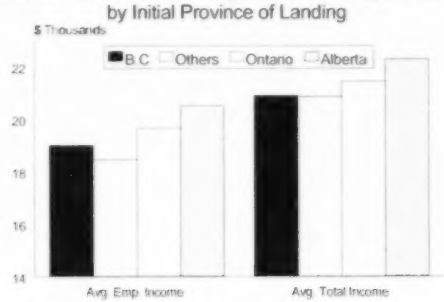
Immigrants who came from the United States and Western Europe, Great Britain in particular, tended to have higher employment income and total income than those who came from South Asia and South/Central America. Among immigrants from the top source countries in Asia, immigrants from India and China Mainland tended to earn a relatively lower income then those from Vietnam, Hong Kong and the Philippines.

Average 1995 Income of B.C. Immigarnts
By Source landed 1980-1995



As discussed in previous feature articles, some immigrants living in B.C. during 1995 had moved from other provinces in which they initially landed. A comparison of earnings among immigrants residing in B.C. during 1995 by their initial province of landing shows that immigrants who moved from Alberta and Ontario tended to have higher average employment or total income than those who landed in B.C. or the rest of Canada.

1995 Income of Immigrants residing in B.C.
by Initial Province of Landing



While the IMDB is useful for comparing income characteristics of immigrants based on various social/demographic characteristics of immigrants at the time of their landing, it is insufficient to be used for determining the factors that caused the differences in income levels. For example, the IMDB cannot be used to analyze the reason why there were income differences between males and females or between Europe and Asian immigrants. This is due to the lack of associated information in the IMDB related to employment characteristics such as length of employment, part time/full time job mix and occupation/industry representation, etc.

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BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)	Oct 1/99	% change on one year ago
BC	4,037.2	0.8
Canada	30,572.5	0.8
GDP and INCOME		% change on
(BC - at market prices)	1998	one year ago
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) *($ millions)*	110,948	-0.2
GDP *($ 1992 millions)*	99,708	0.2
GDP *($ 1992 per Capita)*	24,908	-0.8
Personal Disposable Income *($ 1992 per Capita)*	15,969	-1.6
TRADE ($ millions)		
Manufacturing Shipments (seas. adj.) Oct	3,159	7.7
Merchandise Exports (raw) Oct	2,510	9.1
Retail Sales (seasonally adjusted) Oct	2,807	3.3
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX		% change on
(all items - 1992=100)	Nov '99	one year ago
BC	111.5	1.5
Canada	111.4	2.2
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		% change on
(seasonally adjusted)	Dec '99	one year ago
Labour Force - BC	2,091	1.4
Employed - BC	1,918	1.3
Unemployed - BC	172	2.1
		Dec '98
Unemployment Rate - BC *(percent)*	8.2	8.2
Unemployment Rate - Canada *(percent)*	6.9	8.0
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Jan 12/00	Jan 13/99
Prime Business Rate	6.50	6.75
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	7.60	6.40
- 5 year	8.55	6.90
US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Jan 12/00	Jan 13/99
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn $	1.4547	1.5288
US $ *(reciprocal of the closing rate)*	0.6879	0.6566
AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGE RATE		% change on
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	Dec '99	one year ago
BC	635.95	1.4
Canada	604.46	3.5

SOURCES:

Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Wage Rate } Statistics Canada

Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics

For latest Weekly Financial Statistics see www.bank-banque-canada.ca/english/wfsgen.htm

Released this week by BC STATS

- Labour Force Statistics, December 1999
- Tourism Room Revenue, September 1999

Next week

- Quarterly Regional Statistics, 4th Quarter 1999
- Earnings & Employment Trends, Dec. 1999
- Consumer Price Index, December 1999

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